

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1 and 9 as in the attached marked-up copy to read as follows:

A<sup>2</sup>

1. (Amended) A method for producing a silicon nitride filter, which comprises heat-treating in nitrogen a green body comprising:

from 35 to 90 mass% of silicon nitride particles having an average particle diameter of from 1 to 30 $\mu$ m,

from 5 to 60 mass% of a pore-forming agent and

from 0.1 to 5 mass% of metal oxide particles,

provided that the total amount of the silicon nitride particles, the pore-forming agent and the metal oxide particles is at least 90 mass%,

to form a porous product.

A<sup>3</sup>

9. (Amended) A method for producing a silicon nitride filter, which comprises heat-treating in nitrogen a green body comprising:

from 45 to 85 mass% of silicon nitride particles having an average particle diameter of from 1 to 30 $\mu$ m,

from 10 to 50 mass% of metal oxide hollow particles and

from 0.1 to 5 mass% of metal oxide solid particles,

provided that the total amount of the silicon nitride particles, the metal oxide hollow particles and the metal oxide solid particles is at least 90 mass%,

to form a porous product.